

June 1973

One Million Big Books

THE WHITE HOUSE acceptance of that one-millionth copy of the book *Alcoholics Anonymous* was, of course, a high honor. Measuring just how high, you come out with 27.62 miles. In other words, you'd need a bookshelf almost 28 miles long to hold 1,000,000 copies of AA's basic text.

End to end, they would stretch about 8,375,000 inches, over 697,916 feet, or more than 132 miles.

If you have a hard time picturing a stack of books 27.62 miles high, maybe you can use this comparison. One of the world's tallest structures is the KTHI-TV tower in Fargo, N.Dak. You'd have to pile 70 of those towers on top of each other to reach as high as a stack of a million Big Books.

To put it another way: Such a tower of books would be higher than 116 Empire State Buildings stacked atop each other.

The calculations were done with the aid of a World Almanac and a Big Book of the present size, 1¾ inches thick. However, the original volume, printed in 1939, was nearly 2 inches thick, because Mr. Edward Blackwell of Cornwall Press (who printed the thing mostly on faith, without much hope he'd ever get paid) used ... But let Bill W. tell the story:

"We fixed the retail price of the book at \$3.50. This figure was the result of long

and heated arguments.... As a consolation to the contestants, we directed Mr. Blackwell to do the job on the thickest paper in his shop. The original volume proved to be so bulky that it became known as the 'Big Book.' Of course, the idea was to convince the alcoholic purchaser that he was indeed getting his money's worth!"